

REMARKS

The Office action dated June 25, 2004, has been carefully considered. Independent claim 1 has been amended. The specification has been amended to correct informalities and typographical errors. No new matter has been added by these amendments. Reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Applicants thank Examiner David Walczak for the courtesies extended to the undersigned during a telephone interview on July 28, 2004. The comments presented and discussed during the interview are incorporated into the remarks below.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings because reference characters **32** and **34** are not present in any of the drawings. The drawings have been amended to add reference character **32** in Fig. 1, and reference character **34** in Fig. 2. No new matter has been added by this amendment. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has objected to the specification because of various informalities. It is respectfully submitted that these informalities have been corrected as detailed below.

The word "Design" in paragraph 0001, line, 1 has been deleted, as required by the Examiner's suggestions.

Paragraph 0012, line 1, has been amended to describe Fig. 2 as an elevational view of a gripping element as in Fig. 1 "rotated 90°" to clarify that Figs. 1 and 2 have the same grip, but different views. Accordingly, in paragraph 0013, line 2, and paragraph 0014, line 2, "Fig. 1" has been changed to "Figs. 1 and 2".

Corrections to paragraphs 0022, 0030, 0031, and 0032 have been made as required by the Examiner.

The Examiner has also objected to the specification for failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the term "resilient material" in claim 5. It is respectfully submitted that support for "resilient material" can be found at paragraph 0010, on page 3, of the originally-filed specification ("The material of the gripping element may be softer and/or more resilient"). Accordingly, the term "resilient material" in claim 5 has proper antecedent basis.

No new matter has been added by these amendments. Withdrawal of this objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 4-10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by United States patent No. 6,375,373 to Izushima ("Izushima"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that the elevated sections are "polygons." Support for this amendment may be found, for example, on paragraph 0008, lines 8-10 ("The elevated sections may be non-contiguous, intercalated but spaced apart shapes, such as intercalated crosses and hexagons or sliced hexagons.") and in the drawings. As discussed and agreed by the Examiner during the interview, Izushima discloses rings, not polygons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection and reconsideration and allowance of independent claim 1 and all claims depending therefrom are respectfully requested.

Claims 2 and 3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Izushima. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

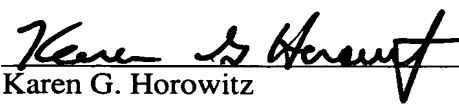
As discussed above, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that the elevated sections are "polygons" and therefore patentably distinguishes over Izushima, which discloses rings. Because claims 2 and 3 depend from now allowable independent claim 1, claims 2 and 3 are also allowable. Withdrawal of this rejection and reconsideration and allowance of claims 2 and 3 are respectfully requested.

The above amendments are fully supported by the originally-filed specification. No new matter has been introduced. For the above reasons, reconsideration and allowance of independent claim 1 and all claims depending therefrom are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner not agree all claims are allowable, then a personal or telephonic interview with the undersigned is respectfully requested to discuss any remaining issues and to accelerate allowance of the present application.

No fee is believed to be due for this amendment. Should any fee be required, please charge such fee to Jones Day Deposit Account No. 16-1150.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure (Replacement Sheet 1)